Gervais: 'No comment'

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By ALLAN KATZ

"I did what I had to do, and I have no comment beyond that," says Pershing O. Gervais, chief government witness in the trial of District Atty. Jim Garrison.

Gervais, reached at his home in Brookhaven, Miss., declined to express any reaction to the acquittal yesterday of Garrison and pinball executives Robert Nims and John Aruns Callery, despite testimony by Gervais that the three were involved in bribes to secure protection for illegal pinball gambling.

"I have nothing to say," said Gervais. "It's up to the news media to comment about and analyze the trial. It's not for me to do. I've already done what I had to do, and that's it."

GERVAIS ALSO declined to comment on the possibility that Garrison might bring criminal charges against him.

"I definitely have no comment to make on that," he said.

Gervais, working as an undercover agent for the government in 1970-71, gathered more than 50 tapes of conversations with Garrison and others. He also testified for the government as a rebuttal witness.

A key factor in Garrison's defense was an all-out attack on Gervais' character. The DA told the jury that Gervais was a man who could not be trusted and who worshipped only money.

Gervais, in his testimony, characterized Garrison as a man who had accepted bribes from the pinball industry almost from the moment that Garrison took office in 1962.

GERVAIS was in New Orleans earlier yesterday, testifying before a grand jury about more pinball bribes at the same time that the U.S. District Court jury was deciding to free Garrison, Callery and Nims.

After he returned home, Gervais said he would return to New Orleans to testify further if he were supoenaed.

"If they order me to appear, I won't have much choice, will I?" said Gervais. "It's like I told you: I did what I had to do. That's all there is to it."